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Approved For Release 2005/06/22 : CIA-RDP85T00875R002000190036-7

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

2 November 1961

STAFF MEMORANDUM NO. 68-61 (Internal ONE Working Paper - CIA  
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SUBJECT: Congo -- Possible Developments Involving Military Action

1. Military action in the Congo has been limited for the most part to minor skirmishes thus far despite a proliferation of "armies", and a chronic crisis situation. The presence of upwards of 16,000 UN troops with a mandate to prevent civil conflict, and the reluctance of the Congolese troops to fight have combined to discourage widespread armed conflict. The failure of the recent UN military action in Katanga, however, and Katanga's insistent refusal to accept the authority of the Central Government have created a new situation in which the prospect for civil war is probably greater than it has been at any time since Congolese independence.

2. The Central Government feels under pressure to assert its authority over Katanga or risk the loss of its position. Central Government forces are now on the Katanga border and Premier Adoula has announced that they will engage in a police action against

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secessionist Katanga. Gizenga, who went to Leopoldville and acknowledged the Adoula government, is now in Stanleyville and shows signs of wishing to rebuild Stanleyville as a power base for the Lumumbist faction in the Congo. He might believe he could do this by a military blow against Katanga. For his part, Tshombe in Katanga might take the initiative and strike at Central Government troops in the Luluabourg area and along the provincial border, or he might break the recent cease-fire agreement and attack UN troops in Katanga in order to assert his independence. Recently acquired UN jets are now patrolling the Katanga border apparently seeking to separate the antagonists rather than helping the ANC.

3. The Armee Nationale du Congo (ANC), which totals about 18,000 men, under General Mobutu provides the Central Government with the largest military force in the Congo. It is relatively well equipped with light arms and transport. Four battalions are located in Kasai and some forces are on the Katanga frontier. These troops are ill-disciplined and their main concerns are food and pay. Many of them come and go from one unit to another at will, some of them switching back and forth not only between units in the ANC but between the ANC and other armies in the Congo in search of better quarters, pay, food or more indulgent commanders. Their

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loyalties are ephemeral and it is uncertain that they would follow the orders of General Mobutu or other ANC officers if they required sustained fighting or hardship.

4. The force of 7,000 men under General Lundula in Stanleyville is theoretically part of the Central Government's force. General Lundula has pledged his allegiance to Adoula's government and he has been offered a Major Generalship on the condition that he come to Leopoldville. He has not done so. If Gizenga were to launch an effort to take Katanga and bring it back into the Congo he would have to make a deal with General Lundula and use his men to do the marching and the fighting.  estimate 5,000 of Lundula's force is in the border area of Kivu province near Katanga. The willingness of Lundula's men to obey orders in a situation that involved hardship and danger is even less certain than in the case of Mobutu's troops.

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5. The effectiveness of the nearly 10,000-man Katanga force remains dependent upon the role of some 600 white mercenaries. The Katanga troops may be somewhat better disciplined than those in other Congolese forces, and their belief that they defeated UN troops might contribute to their confidence. Furthermore, apart from some units in northern Katanga, they would be likely to be fighting a defensive action and have less of a transportation and supply problem than forces sent against them.

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6. In Kalonji's satrapy of South Kasai, in which there are nearly one million Baluba refugees, the military forces do not consider themselves under the ANC command. These forces (about 2,800 men) may become involved in factional disputes within South Kasai or in new outbreaks of Lulua-Baluba warfare which has cost several thousand lives over the past three years. They are unlikely to become involved in wider conflicts except as ANC, Stanleyville, or Katanga troops pass through their territory.

7. In the event of an attack by Central Government troops on Katanga the UN would be faced with the necessity of deciding whether to (a) place its troops between the Congolese forces; (b) step aside and countenance civil war; or (c) support the Central Government in its effort to integrate Katanga by force. At present it seems to be trying to use its jet aircraft to accomplish the first of these alternatives. Current UN forces in Kasai and northern Katanga are probably insufficient to halt at least an initial thrust by Central Government forces. Should the UN stop or hamper ANC actions it would further entangle the UN with the Central Government which is already critical (as are most other African states) of its role in negotiating the current cease-fire agreement. Hostilities between the UN and ANC forces could result,

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and the Adoula government might decide to undertake its threatened review of relations with the UN.

8. Even if General Mobutu's numerically superior forces should enter Katanga the outcome would be highly uncertain. Mobutu would be heavily dependent upon assistance from the enigmatic General Lundula in Stanleyville (recently attacked by one of his own men while attempting to quell a disturbance) pushing down from Kindu in Kivu province. The Leopoldville forces would also run the risk of opposition from the South Kasai "army" before entering Katanga from Luluabourg and elsewhere. The activities of the poorly-supplied ANC troops might soon degenerate into brigandage and fighting with local tribes.

9. In this case or in the event of setbacks at the hands of the Katanga forces, Mobutu might well be dismissed, and the military capabilities of the Central Government diminished. Adoula's position would suffer grave damage. In this extremity Adoula might request direct US assistance in the form of military equipment and supplies. Failure to obtain such assistance would probably bring about a sharp improvement in the fortunes of the Gizengists, and possibly lead to a request for Bloc military aid.

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10. Tshombe, encouraged by Katanga extremists and white "ultras" might break the cease-fire and once again embroil the UN in fighting Africans. The Katanga military and air forces have undergone a steady buildup in recent weeks. Belgian, French, and South African mercenaries remain, and the strength of Katanganese forces may have been increased by the mingling of Union Miniere guard units with the regular Katanga units.

11. The fate of the estimated 50,000 Baluba tribesmen now in camps -- principally in Elisabethville -- supervised by a few UN troops is an issue which may precipitate new clashes. Lumumbist agitators inside the camp are whipping up anti-Katanga sentiment and urging a mass break out; inside the Katanga Government anti-Baluba extremists urge Tshombe to stamp out this threat by forcibly taking over the camps. Such action might involve breaking the cease-fire. The UN forces might once again be called on to resume police action and UN Headquarters would be confronted with a major decision.

12. In Stanleyville, Gizenga is once again seeking arms from external sources. It is possible that Gizenga could induce Lundula, who favors a tough policy toward Tshombe, to launch an attack across

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northern Katanga. The purpose of such a venture might range from: (a) a new play by Gizenga to achieve the ascendancy of Stanleyville in the Congo, bringing down Tshombe in the process, or (b) a desire by Gizenga to bolster his position within the central government.

13. In sum, there is little prospect that the use of military force in the Congo might lead to a clean-cut military victory with easily discernable political consequences. On the contrary, military action would probably lead to an indecisive civil war characterized by brigandage, disorganized tribal war, or some combination of the two. In concert with deteriorating economic and social conditions, these results would probably encourage sharply increased meddling by external forces. However, it is unlikely that even then would any domestic or outside group grasp sufficient control of the confused situation to gain domination over the Congo as a whole over the next several months. The most likely consequence of large-scale military conflict would be the discrediting and undermining of Adoula's Central Government.

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